

## THE KARUNA-COMPASSION PRACTICE OF BUDDHISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Pynnardipa<sup>1</sup>, Bhante Dr. Chandrakitti (Champalal Mandrele)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Research Scholar, Samrat Ashok Subharti School of Buddhist Studies, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, U.P. -250002, India.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor & HOD, Samrat Ashok Subharti School of Buddhist Studies, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, U.P. -250002, India.

### ABSTRACT

In current world, all living beings are facing with various types of problems or sufferings and they all want to escape from those things. In addition, they are very thirsty of Karuna-compassion. Therefore, we need to find the way to solve or reduce those problems or sufferings. When one sees those who are facing with problems or sufferings, karuna-compassion is taken in his/ her mind. In Buddhist philosophy, it is called 'karuna' in Pali. In modern world, karuna-compassion is really needed to practice or cultivate by not only doing to develop in mind but also taking action by bodily, verbally & mentally. In modern world, the people generally cultivate karuna-compassion in mind only. Actually, the practice of Karuna is taken action so that beings can solve or reduce problems or sufferings or to achieve happy and peaceful mind. This paper is to study the word 'karuna' in Buddhism and to explore how to apply it in daily life. In this paper, the researcher will explain the aspect of karuna-compassion with aspect of theory and practice. In the modern world, if one is lack of karuna-compassion to cultivate, one may be harmful to beings in any way. As a result, the society in modern world without the application of karuna-compassion with practical aspect will not be happy and peaceful. So, one indeed should practice karuna in daily living. In that way, happy and peaceful world that all living beings have been living can be developed by the practice of karuna-compassion by taking action according to Buddhist philosophy. If a Buddhist practices karuna in everyday life, one can enjoy the happy and peaceful mind and the society or environment will be beautiful and peaceful.

**Key Words:** Karuna-Compassion, Practice, Buddhism & Everyday life

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid 19 epidemic, global warming, water floods, natural disasters, poverty, violence, war, disharmony, challenging political power based on economic crisis, etc. are only a few examples of the many sorts of suffering that exist in the modern world. Because they want to be the most powerful person or country in the world, the majority of people are tense and prepared to start a conflict. These are actually the result of human greed, error, or superpowers in politics or the economy. As a result, both living and non-living things eventually undergo change and damage. Humans and other animate species have been struggling with a range of psychological and physical issues.

We must really look for solutions to those issues if we want to lessen the misery caused by hurdles in life. There are, however, the one and only means to learn from the Buddha. It is a manner that Karuna is practised in regular life. Here, the researcher wants to illustrate how to practise karuna-compassion in daily life. According to the Buddhist philosophy, whenever we witness someone who is through bodily or mental suffering, karuna-compassion is triggered in our hearts or minds. Karuna-compassion may occur in our hearts or minds, but it typically remains there exclusively.

According to the researcher, it is insufficient. To ensure that all living creatures are free from emotional and physical suffering, it is important to demonstrate karuna-compassion. Living things can be transformed from suffering to happiness to a condition of peace by putting the Buddha's teaching of karuna-compassion into practise. According to various factors, the researcher emphasises the practise of karuna-compassion in this research paper so that readers can either experience a happy and peaceful mind or observe a happy and peaceful society.

#### **Karuna: Buddhist Method of Compassion**

The Pali word 'Karuna' means 'compassion' in English felt as a quivering commiseration in the heart. Compassion is not mingled with any other sense of expression. The term of 'compassion' which is translated as 'love', is mixed up with Raga. Passionate feeling of attachment. In fact, Metta means wishing others to be blessed with happiness. On the other hand, Karuna-compassion is not mingled with other sense.

Compassion is the mind endowed with wishing tender loving care a person who is in trouble, wishing to be free from suffering or misery. Therefore, the compassionate heart is softer than the petals of a flower. The compassion exemplar is the same mother-child relationship that remains undisturbed by fear and aversion when the child is suffering. The

practice of compassion allows for sustained and unobstructed presence of mind as the darker side of life is lifted into the light of awareness. Ahimsa, harmlessness is primary of Karuna. A person who lacks of Karuna makes others harmful. Therefore, Ahimsa means compassion, having tender care, endowed with compassion, liberation of the mind, which is karuna towards living beings. This is called Ahimsa. A truly compassionate person lives not for himself but for others. He seeks opportunities to see others expecting nothing in return, not even gratitude. Therefore, to feast on the flesh of animals by killing or causing them to be killed is not human compassion. Compassion takes away from the heart the inert weight, the paralyzing heaviness; it gives wings to those who cling to the lowlands of self. Compassion that is strength and gives strength; this is the highest compassion. Karuna is one of the Four Brahmaviharas. Brahma in this case has been translated as divine or noble. Vihara means abiding and living. In addition, those who practice these are said to be abiding or living in the divine or noble way. The four Bramviharas are:

1. Metta-loving kindness;
2. Karuna- Compassion;
3. Mudita- Sympathetic joy; and
4. Upekkha- Equanimity.

These four are attitudes towards other beings. They are also favourable relationships. They can also be extended towards an immeasurable scope of beings and so are called immeasurable. Karuna of them means nothing but a feeling of compassion and goodwill. If any others, therefore, is suffering, make saint person's heart of the good quiver, wishing to remove the suffering of others by hearing, seeing. In other word, Karuna means when there is suffering in others it causes good people's hearts to be moved, thus it is compassion. Karuna activates one to save others who are in suffering. If one volunteers in a selfless, self-sacrificing, intelligent and skillful manner to help others, then that could be called Karuna.

#### **Characteristics of Karuna**

Compassion is characterized as promoting the aspect of allaying suffering. It is compassioning that compels one serve others with unselfish motives. Its function resides in not bearing others' suffering. It is manifested as non-cruelty. A good person endowed with Karuna does not makes not only human but also all living beings including even dumb animals and fertile eggs. Its proximate cause is to see helplessness in those overwhelmed by sufferings. The heart of compassionate persons cannot rest satisfied until they relieve the sufferings of others. Therefore, Karuna is softer than flowers.

#### **Bodhisatta or Bodhisattav's Karuna**

The lord Buddha in one of his previous existences as Sumedha the hermit, offered his body to serve as a bridge on the path which was then under repairs, to be trod upon by Dipankara who was about to come along that roadway. At the time, if he had practiced the noble Dhamma after assuming the role of bhikkhu, we would have become an Arahant and then entered Nibbana in this very life. Quality of preventing one's own happiness from occurring, or deterring one's self-realization of happiness. Therefore, a person who is compassionate will lose his opportunity to some extent to make himself happy since he has to be rendering help to another to let the other escape from trouble or misery. Thus, Sumedha, the hermit had pondered as follows:

"Rare indeed is a person like me who is fully endowed with the strength of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. The majority are unfortunately lacking in the quality of this strength. Such individuals are beings cannot know and realize on their own, intuition the Dhamma which can lead them to state of liberation from suffering of old age, sickness and death. Nor were they able to practice that kind of Dhamma. Despite the fact that I am accomplished with the necessary strength, it will not be very beneficial by merely striving for my own individual salvation. I should emulate the example of Dipankara by performing moral practices and accumulating the merits of Paramitas (perfection) to become a Buddha, and then save all beings are weak and mentally deficient.

#### **Karuna-Compassion of the Buddha**

After attainment of the full Enlightenment as a Buddha, he could have found of happiness without having to worry about teaching, and live comfortably. However, for the entire period of forty-five years, in as much as he can had to impart his noble teachings day and night without rest, he had to undergo a lot of physical hardship and strain. This benevolent performance with relentless effort was done simply because of his universal love and great compassion for all beings who are drifting along endlessly in the miserable whirlpool of samsara. The Buddha was sympathetic teacher as is clear from the numerous references to Buddh's sympathy, Karuna in the Therava discourses. Etymologically, 'sympathy' can be understood as the condition of 'being moved' in accordance with (others) or 'in

response to others'. The Buddha's compassion towards all beings is equally balanced without distinction irrespective of whether a person is intimate or unfamiliar. In the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha says:

"Monks, there is one individual who arose and came to be for the welfare of the multitudes, for the happiness of the multitudes, out of the sympathy for the world; for the benefit, welfare and happiness of gods and humans. Who is that one individual? The Harmonious One, the Perfectly Enlightened One."

## 2. THE METHOD OF DEVELOPING KARUNA

The developing of Karuna bhavana, the method to be applied is similar to that of developing Metta Bhavana. However, there is different of them is that Karuna, compassion embraces all sorrow-stricken beings, while Metta, loving-kindness embraces all living beings, happy or sorrowful. A person who about to start developing Karuna bhavana, the following four persons should not be taken at the beginning:

1. Unbeloved one;
2. Intimate friends;
3. Neutral beings; and
4. Enemies.

The most beloved one should not be developed at the initial state because it could cause grief of near enemy. He is an affectionate person, remained as a dear. It should not be un-beloved one that cannot motivate Karuna in him. Neutral beings will continue to remain as the neutral beings. The opposite sex and the dead are also not suitable position regarding to this Karuna Bhavana. In addition, it should not be an enemy that it could even be glad about it.

### Developing Karuna-Compassion

In the Vibhanga Pali, it is described how Bhikkhu dwell endowed with developing Karuna towards one region. For example, while (bhikkhu) see a person who was distressing, situation is faced, worse condition prevails, would have his sympathy or compassion. In the same way, (bhikkhu) should pervade his Karuna, compassion towards all beings.

According to above, the commentary said that Karuna should be developed and radiated first towards a very pitiable person who is in great distress. Therefore, karuna should be developed initially towards individuals who are in extreme distress, such as a person who is in great trouble, or a destitute with no friends and relatives to be relied upon, or a disease-stricken person who is groaning with pain for not receiving the aid of medical doctor and for lack of medicine, or a detestable person afflicted with leprosy so loathsome that nobody would like to touch him. Thus, Karuna should be developed at the begin from a poor pitiable person because feeling of compassion will easily arise while see such a person in distress.

Then, in another way, Karuna should be developed towards a happy-go-lucky person who is committing evil deeds by comparing him with a man awaiting orders to be hanged or an imminent death after receiving capital punishment. A person, developing Karuna should arouse compassion for an evil-doing person even if he is happy: "Though this poor in misery now happy his wealth, may see a happy, after his demise, he is going to descent to the Nether worlds for his demerits." He can develop Karuna towards another people in vice. There is only one method of developing Karuna, unlike developing Metta which involves many kinds. It is stated as "May (so and so) be free or liberated from misery." To develop Karuna is not as easy as developing Metta. Because Metta can be developed with one's innermost feeling of loving-kindness and imparted to any other person as compassion only to a person who deserves compassion. It is impossible to develop mindfulness on Karuna towards a person in happy mood. The object of compassion of a suffering being and it has to see the suffering of a being.

### Developing Karuna, Compassion to all beings without distinction

This is called anodhisopparana Karuna in Pali. Anodhisopparana Karuna means compassion radiated to all beings in suffering without discrimination them as male, female, etc. The method of pervading compassion without distinction is as follows:

1. May all beings be liberated from misery.
2. May all those beings who breathe be liberated from misery.
3. May all those beings whose identity is well known be liberated from misery.
4. May all individual be liberated from misery and,
5. May all those beings who have body and individuality be liberated from misery.

The above are the five Anodhisopparana-karuna indicating the method of developing karuna towards all beings without limitation and distinction as mentioned like in Metta. Developing Karunana, Compassion to all beings with Specification (Odhisopparana-Karuna)

Odhisopharana Karuna Bhavana means compassion, which is pervaded to all beings specifying them as male, female, noble persons, worldlings, etc. the method of pervading compassion with specification is as follows:

1. May all females be liberated from misery, in the same way, hen,
2. Males;
3. Ariyas (Noble ones);
4. Puthujjanas (worldling);
5. Devas (deities);
6. Human beings; and
7. All beings in Apayas (four woeful abodes)

This is the method of developing the seven kinds Odhisopharana Karuna. If this seven Odhisopharana-karuna is added five Anodhisopharana-Karuna, it will come to twelve. These are Disa-anodhisa-karuna- twelve kinds in number, without distinguishing or limiting region wise. If developed by distinguishing the region, there will be twelve each for every region. As there are ten regions, it will come to 120.

#### **Developing Disa-Odhisapharana Karuna-bhavana**

Disa-Odhisapharana Karuna means compassion radiated to all beings in misery, combining with all ten directions and all being's specification. It is radiated as follows:

1. May all beings in east;
2. May all sentient beings;
3. May all existing beings;
4. May all individuals;
5. May all those who have come into existence;
6. May all female beings;
7. May all male beings;
8. May all noble persons;
9. May all worldlings;
10. May all celestial beings (devas and brahmas);
11. May all human beings and
12. May all miserable beings in four apaya be free from misery.

In the same way, one must radiate Karuna, compassion to beings in other nine directions-west, north, south, south-east, north-west, north-east, south-west, lower direction and upper direction (in 12 ways in each direction).

### **3. ADVANTAGES OF DEVELOPING KARUNA-COMPASSION**

There are eleven advantages of developing karuna mentioned in the Anguttara Nikaya like a metta. These advantages are: sound sleep, wakes up peacefully, no bad dream, love both human and non-human and guarded by celestial beings, unaffected by fire, poison and weapons, developing concentration quickly, cheerful in face, die without bewilderment.

The last eleventh benefit is most notable because there a person chooses two ways had been develop Karuna after demising. Either he may choose at the present life, becoming a Noble one or he may reborn as a Brahma life in the future. A person, who developed Karunana Bhavana, can reach the Noble one such as Sotapanna (stream enterer) etc., by virtue his Magga (path) and (fruit). On the other hand, he can reborn in world of Brahmas when he demised by virtue his Karuna-jhana.

Although he cannot attain yet, die without confusing and may reborn in the Sugati, happy-realms. Even he perhaps, was reborn in world of Brahmas without attaining magga and Phala, he surely may become a Noble One later in his life-span and gradually concentrating on his Jhana-samadhi finally he will become the worthy one. Arahant and liberated from samsara as life of brahmas in Sudha vasa Brahma World.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

In this article, discussed about Karuna and the important role of karuna bhavana in everyday life. Karuna bhavana was in the important teaching of the Buddha in Buddhism for all human beings. It was known asahimsa a practice. Therefore, one should practice karuna bhavana so that all beings can be free from mental and physical sufferings in everyday life. Everyone would like to live peacefully and be free from mental and physical sufferings or torturing's. If one sees living beings who are encountering sufferings, one feels emotion in the heart or mind and wishes them to be free from those sufferings. Therefore, he or she would like to help them to be free from those sufferings by not harming them even in the mind but cultivating karuna-compassion. This is a good practice according to Buddhism.

The Buddha also praises such as person who practices karuna bhavan in everyday life. For the person who practices karuna bhavana, it is sure that such a person will enjoy happy and peaceful mind. In that way, the practice of karuna bhavana in Buddhism is a beneficial for not only oneself but also all beings. So, one should practice karuna bhavana in everyday life so that one can enjoy happy and peaceful mind and see the happy and peaceful society around the world.

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